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SUBJECT: EU'S EASTERN PARTNERSHIP--SWEDEN'S PROPOSAL

¶1. (U) The Swedish MFA Eastern European Desk met with Poloff on October 20 to discuss Sweden and Poland's joint proposal to establish an "Eastern Partnership" between the EU and Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. Director Johan Frisell told Poloff the Partnership aims to go beyond the current EU Neighbor Policy (ENP) to deepen bilateral cooperation and integration, including the possibility of cooperating on security, migration, economic, environmental and social issues. The goal of the Partnership is to give these former Soviet republics the opportunity to have a partnership with the EU similar to what Norway has: select membership benefits without the membership card.

¶2. (U) Each country has its respective political and economic constraints that make it difficult to meet basic EU membership requirements, even over the next decade. The Russia-Georgia conflict gave led Sweden and Poland to fast-track the proposal onto the EU Commission's agenda and it will go before the Commission at the end of November. Frisell said the EU members have been unable to agree on punitive measures, "sticks", towards Russia, but are likely to agree to offer "carrots" to the former Soviet republics to bring them westward. Already there is general support at the low to mid levels of the Commission. Frisell cautioned that the highest levels of the Commission have yet to see the proposal, thus it is unknown what the final draft will look like. Frisell said Russia has yet to object to these countries cooperating on political level with the West, so Sweden does not anticipate a harsh reaction such as would happen if one of the countries joined NATO.

¶3. (U) The draft text of the Eastern Partnership Proposal has been sent to EUR/NB.  
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